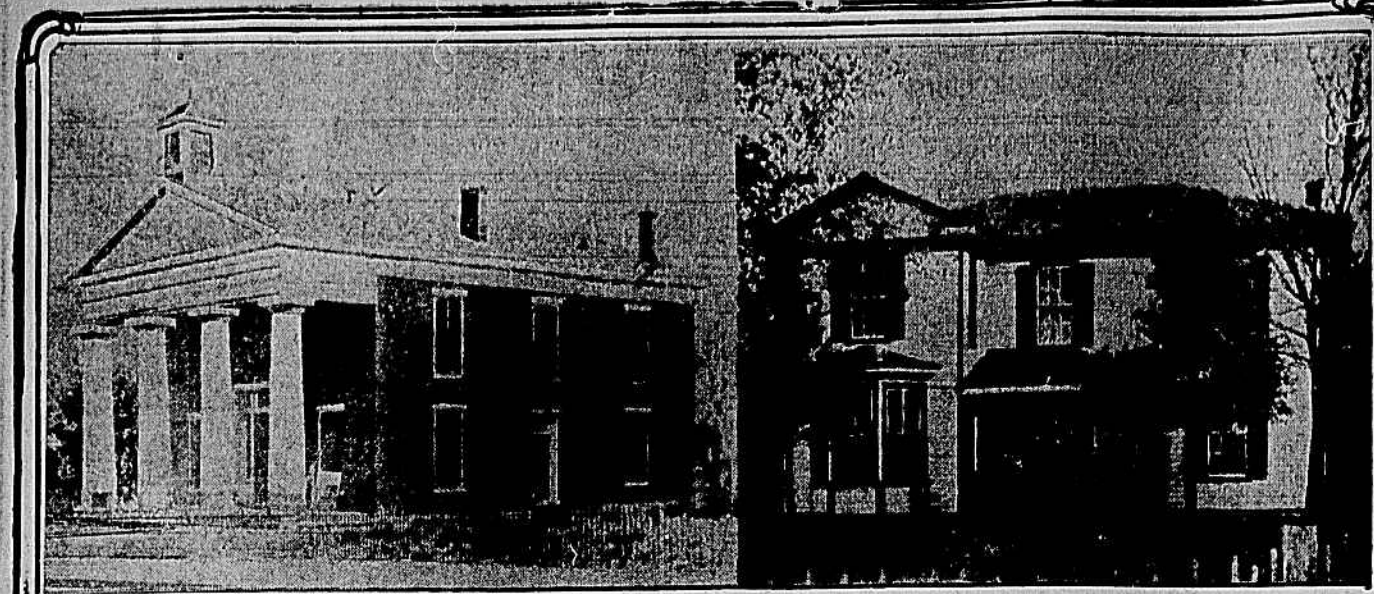


## TYPICAL SCENES IN THE LIFE OF BRUNSWICK COUNTY



Brunswick Courthouse. Built in 1854.

some deceased "brave" or "savage," who has long hunted with bow and arrow, placed by comrades in the grave, in the "happy hunting ground." In the upper end of the county especially have these relics been found.

When the county was first settled so hostile were the Indians that a fort had to be established on the Meherrin River, a short distance below the present site of Pennington's Bridge. Even to this day there is an old road in that vicinity which bears the suggestive name, "The Fort Road." Many years ago an old cannon stood on a hill near this place, a forcible reminder of the early struggles of the citizens of the county with their hostile neighbors.

## Boundaries and Distances.

Brunswick county is bounded north by the Nottoway River, the dividing line between Brunswick county and Nottoway county, and also the dividing line between Brunswick county and Dinwiddie county; east by Greensville county, south by the State of North Carolina, and west by Mecklenburg and Lunenburg counties.

A good idea of the distance of the county from prominent points can be obtained by taking the distance of the town of Lawrenceville, which is located at the center of the county, from these places. Lawrenceville is seventy-three miles southwest from Richmond, the capital of the State; about 100 miles from Hampton, Va.; a slightly shorter distance from the city of Norfolk, Va.; about 100 miles from Danville, Va.; and about fifty miles from Petersburg, Va.

## Railways in the County.

As I explained in a letter written from here last week, Brunswick county has within the past twenty years gotten into railway touch with the outside world, and the advantages of this railway connection are well set forth in the booklet, "The Atlantic and Danville, now the Danville-Norfolk branch of the Southern Railway, was the first to build through the county. It traverses the county from east to west a distance of twenty-five miles. However, until the year 1900 Brunswick county had no communication by rail to the Northern markets except in a circuitous way. In that year there was constructed the Richmond Division of the Seaboard Air Line Railway system, extending from Richmond, through Petersburg, to Norfolk in North Carolina, the junction with that branch of the Seaboard Air Line running from Portsmouth to Raleigh and the South.

For the past two years there has been in process of construction through the county from east to west the Virginia Railway, which, it is said, will have no superior in point of construction in the United States, will run from the coal fields of West Virginia to Norfolk, thus making a great trunk line, connecting the Chesapeake and Norfolk and Western Railways. The Seaboard Air Line Railway and the Virginia each traverses the county for about the same distance as the Southern, giving Brunswick county a total railroad mileage of about eighty miles.

A slight consideration of the markets reached by these three trunk lines of railway will serve to convince one that Brunswick county has exceeded facilities for reaching the great markets of the world. With Norfolk and other points on deep water reached by two railways, and with the consequent ability to reach the Northern markets and the Old World markets by sea; with Petersburg, Richmond, Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and other Northern markets reached in a direct line by rail, and with the Southern and Western markets both easily reached by direct railroad connections, what more is needed to convince a prospective settler in Brunswick county of the almost unparalleled advantages that this county enjoys in respect to marketing the crops grown on its soil, and the sheep, cattle and horses raised in its pastures?

## The Crops of the County.

The county, as has been stated, contains about 600 square miles of territory. Only about one-fifth of this land is cleared, the rest being covered by timber of many kinds, from the magnificent growth of pine and oak to the scrubby old-field pine. Of the cleared portion of the county only about one-half is in cultivation at any one time. Let a prospective settler in Brunswick county compare this condition with what obtains on the prairie lands of the West, where land is expensive, practically all cleared, and nearly all cultivated. Such a comparison will certainly lead him to the conclusion that a county where land is the first quality, where it is plentiful, cheap and responsive to the effort put forth to extract its hidden riches, a county, moreover, where the welcoming hand of friendship is extended to the right kind of settlers, is certainly a desirable place to which to move. Add to this the fact that nowhere in the world can be found a more enlightened, progressive, hospitable and thrifty class of people, and will require no stretch of the imagination to see that the advantages known to people outside of the State there would be no need for the State of Virginia to offer inducements to people from the West and North to come into her borders and settle upon her uncultivated lands.

## The Soil of the County.

The character of the soil of Brunswick county varies greatly, from a dark red in the western part of the county to a white loamy soil in the eastern part—from what is commonly known as "dark tobacco land" to "fine tobacco land." Nearly all of it is



Residence of I. E. Spaff. Brunswick County Home and Tobacco Field.

naturally rich and easily adapted to the cultivation of corn, tobacco, peanuts, wheat, cotton, rye, hemp and many vegetables. The principal crops of the county—and by these we mean what are known as the "money" crops—are tobacco, corn, cotton and peanuts. Tobacco raised in this county almost invariably brings a good price on the market. Several of the bright tobacco planters came a few years ago from North Carolina, poor in this world's goods, and took up some of the "fine tobacco lands," either as tenants or buying the farms on time and are to-day some of the most prosperous and affluent citizens.

## Trucking Lands.

Vegetables of all kinds thrive well, and a ready market can easily be found for all kinds of truck grown in the county. The soil, especially in the eastern part of the county, is peculiarly adapted to the cultivation of peanuts. Under favorable circumstances, when the soil is properly cultivated, a very large yield is the result. It is not unusual to get a yield of 150 bushels per acre upon improved land, while the average yield per acre upon unimproved land is about forty bushels. It is a money-maker. Machinery is used in the cultivation of peanuts at every stage—from the time the peanuts are planted with a peanut-planter until a peanut-thresher enables the grower to get the crop in bags and shipped to market. Virginia peanuts are in demand the world over. The price now is about \$1.10 per bushel. Spanish peanuts, another variety, are bringing a slightly higher price.

The lands in this county will produce two crops a year. Not more than one market crop, however, is usually made, as our farmers find that one crop each year, well cultivated and properly prepared for market, requires practically all their attention in order to yield the greatest profit. Most of our farmers sow German or red-top clover and rye in the fall of the year in order to have an early supply of food for their teams and cattle. In other instances, where the land requires such improvement, these crops, or a part of them, are used as fallows. Again in the summer, after the harvesting of the grain crops, cow peas are sowed, and the lands of the county seem to be peculiarly adapted to the cultivation of this crop, which has grown to be a great favorite with our people. The vines are either allowed to remain on the ground, thus enriching the soil very materially, or else they are harvested and used as food for horses and cattle.

## Grasses in Abundance.

Alfalfa is steadily growing in favor, and it will not be long before it will be a standard crop. Nearly every section of the county is suited to its growth. In addition to its value as a very nutritious hay, its cultivation serves to improve the land upon which it is grown. It is cut from three to five times a year and the average yield is from three to five tons per acre.

Many different products grown in the county are classed under the general name of hay. The hay most in favor with our people are timothy, clover, berds grass and pea vines. These crops thrive admirably, and taken in connection with the fodder from corn stalks form the principal food of horses and cattle. The short hay consists principally of oats and corn.

The outlying lands of the county are good grass producers, and furnish excellent grazing for stock of all kinds from early spring until late fall. This means that under ordinary circumstances stock will have to be housed and fed for only about three months in the year—that is, December, January and February. During these winter months we feed to stock shucks, wheat, bran and cotton seed.

## Tobacco and Fruits.

Virginia tobacco is known the world over, its flavor and quality are excellent, and there is always a strong demand for it. Brunswick county produces tobacco that is as good as any raised in this country. Its soil is particularly suited to the cultivation of this crop, and our people have raised it for such a long time that they may now be called tobacco experts. They generally

obtain excellent prices for what they raise, and the cultivation of the crop is steadily growing in favor. Fruits of all kinds thrive well. Apples are the principal fruit crop, and are grown to a very large extent. Peaches also are cultivated extensively. The people are beginning to realize that this is as good a peach country as can be found in the United States, and more peach orchards are being planted each year. Pears, cherries, damsons, quinces, plums, blackberries, strawberries and raspberries are also grown. Many of these fruits thrive without any cultivation whatever. Grapes are extensively cultivated and grow wild in many parts of the county. The Concord grape is probably a favorite with our people. The scuppernon is also cultivated with much success.

A large part of Brunswick county is at present uncultivated. Most of this land is admirably suited to the production of fruits of all kinds, and our people are just beginning to realize that there is money in the cultivation of such crops.

Brunswick county is practically self-sufficient. The people raise enough poultry, meat, fruits, etc., to supply themselves. The booklet under review would, of course, not be complete without reference to the historical "Brunswick" of the county, which was born in this county and thus obtained its name. The booklet says:

"Henry Van Dyke has said to know how to cook is not a very elegant accomplishment; yet there are times and seasons when it seems to come in better than familiarity with the dead languages or much skill upon the lute."

Southampton county can boast of the fine brandy distilled within her borders; Isle of Wight of her juicy Southern pines, and Albemarle of her peerless peaches, rendering her the queen of poultry. To Brunswick belongs the honor of originating the "Brunswick stew," a dish not only of county and State, but also of national reputation, and a dish, moreover, that is found upon the daily board of the humble laborer as well as upon the magnificent table of the epicure.

There is some contention as to the exact place in the county where this famous dish was first made, some claiming that it originated on the banks of the Meherrin and others that it was first cooked on the banks of the Nottoway. But this is an immaterial point, inasmuch as the dish did actually originate in Brunswick.

In the booklet Dr. T. J. Taylor furnishes the following:

"The 'Brunswick stew,' which is now made of all sorts of meats and all kinds of vegetables, was originally no such olla podrida. It was made of squirrels and onions principally, with plenty of butter, and was prepared in a simple manner. It was called simply 'squirrel stew,' but should have been called 'Haskins' or 'Matthew' stew."

The doctor then gives the following original recipe for the Haskins family, which was labelled "original squirrel stew" by which name the dish was at first known:

"Parboiled squabbles until they are stiff (half done), cut small slices of bacon (mildling), one for each squirrel; one small onion for each squirrel (if large ones or much skill upon the lute). Put in bacon and onions first to boil, while the squabbles are being cut up for the pot. Boil the above until done, then put in butter to taste; then stale hot bread, crumbled up. Cook then till it bubbles, then add pepper and salt to taste. Cook this until it bubbles and bubbles burst off. Time for stew to cook is four hours with steady heat."

"Note—While cooking keep a tea kettle of hot boiling water to add to pot as necessary. Vegetables are not in the original 'Brunswick stew.' Those who prefer vegetables add them after the stew is done, in their plates."

I do not wish to get into any controversy in regard to the origin and true history of the Brunswick stew, but the one I have tackled in this town, made by the above recipe, is good enough for me, and I think it must be the original.

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